

Pojoaque Valley Planning Committee Meeting Summary
Thursday, December 8, 2005 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Sammy Quintana Community Board Room

(Note: This is a meeting summary and is not intended to give the meeting contents in its entirety. If you would like to get more details about the meeting, please contact another committee member that was present at the meeting, or the SF County Planning staff.)

David D. opened the meeting at about 6:40pm and asked for reports from community members.

Committee Member Reports

Levi commented that the County had changed a street sign on CR 101B to “Dry Creek Road.” He objected that this is not native a description; we have arroyos, not dry creeks. Levi believes that it would be more appropriate to name the street “Arroyo Jacona.” The County claims that 51% of the neighbors approved the name change. Levi never heard about it. He intends to pursue this. David D. commented that when the names of roads are changed, it creates problems for the fire department also, because they are not always informed.

Renee passed around pictures from the dedication of Helenty Holman’s affordable housing project, the Jacona Community Farming Trust. Renee explained that this project is made up of a cluster of properties that share common spaces and agricultural land. People can own their house, but not the land itself because it is held as an affordable property in perpetuity. Helenty is hoping that teachers, law enforcement and health care workers that live and/or work in the Valley will be interested in the affordability aspect and community atmosphere of the project. David commented that this land arrangement has historical roots, and that we are interested in having this type of housing option as a recommendation in our community plan.

Harry Montoya gave us an update on the old school property. The County’s lawyers have done an assessment of the deeds, but the school superintendent wants the school’s lawyers to do an independent assessment. The County would be required to pay \$5,000-\$10,000 for this independent assessment. Harry will see if the County’s lawyers can present their findings to the schools’ lawyers and avoid this extra expense and time. He also said that the schools may have plans for the “L” wing. Jack asked if there are any legislative initiatives to change the funding from demolition to restoration for the building. Harry said that we need to look into this further. The first step would be to go to the Superintendent. David D. commented that we should contact Rep. Lujan about this. Harry remarked that there is funding available for a community center, but that would be used for the Jacona Land Grant site.

The potluck last Saturday was very successful. About 30 people attended and the food was delicious. Diane thanked everyone who helped with it.

David D. told us that he is now Chief of the Pojoaque Volunteer Fire District, and will need to attend meetings on the 3rd Thursday of the month. This may at times conflict with our meetings.

Neel Glass, who lives on the Cuyamungue Land Grant, wondered if he is part of the area covered by our plan. Jack said that at present the plan only includes the traditional community, but it might be possible to include parts of the Cuyamungue Land Grant, as well as the Jacona Land Grant as we have discussed before.

Proposed New Business – Coffee Shop

About 10 new people attended this meeting, in support of the proposed 2000 sq ft. coffeehouse on 502 by local residents, Sef and Ruby Valdez. The proposed site for the business is about

2000 ft west of the old high school. The CDRC has approved this plan, but wanted the Valdez family to present their plan to the PVPC and get our input. The shop will serve coffee and possibly food prepared elsewhere, like pastries and breakfast burritos. There will be indoor and outdoor tables, a drive-through window, and wireless Internet connection available. This would be a place for kids to hang out, for community members to meet together, and for commuters to stop and buy coffee. The committee looked at the site plans and the water budget and discussed traffic issues. The property will be xeriscaped, and water will be purified and recycled for the landscaping. They will also use rainwater catchments and other water conservation techniques.

Jack commented that Sef and Rudy had to request a variance for their business. However, when we complete the community plan, some areas will already be designated commercial, and in this case a variance would not have been necessary.

Sef and Ruby did not need approval from our group, but David said that we would send a letter confirming that they had presented their plans to us. He said he would draft it so they would have a copy of the letter to present at the next Board of County Commissioners.

Planning for Zoning

David showed us the reconciliation of the two sets of maps on which we had outlined proposed commercial areas at the last meeting. Renee had averaged the two maps, and then she and another County staff member had driven around the area to verify them by conducting a windshield survey.

At this meeting we worked on a map of Jacona/Jaconita, and a map of Cuyamungue. Jack emphasized that we were not forcing anyone to be commercial, just making it easier to use the designated areas for commercial purposes if the owners chose to do so. He added that the Traditional Community would continue to allow home occupations, which are very low impact commercial enterprises. The County is currently considering adding a new category called home business, which would be businesses with a higher impact than home occupations.

Neel G. asked why the County wants to cast things in concrete. Jack said that is not what we are proposing. Neel emphasized the importance of public input. He said he was burned by a lack of public input on changes in the past. This opened up a discussion of the process for our proposed changes in the Pojoaque area. Jack said that the County is to notify every affected property owner before rezoning. However, sometimes there are problems reaching everyone because of problems with the addresses. There will be notices in the newspaper and a public hearing. He added that it might be better to also meet with the affected people in another context as well; like through focus groups. Neel commented that notices in the newspaper are not adequate to notify people.

Lynne Velasco asked if there is any plan for frontage roads in the proposed commercial areas in Pojoaque. People drive very fast, and it might be dangerous to have businesses. David D. said that we can hope to get input on the proposed changes to 285 north of the 502/503 intersection. He felt that it would be hard to get the Dept. of Transportation to address changes on 502 until problems appear. Levi emphasized that it was very important for us to provide input on the 285 plans. The committee split up into two groups to mark potential areas in the Cuyamungue and Jacona/Jaconita traditional boundaries that could possibly be designated as commercial districts. We will make our final decision about the best locations for commercial districts at the next meeting on Thursday, December 15, 2005.

Notes by E.B. and R.V.